

SAF/LLZ (Legislative Research Team)

BAKER, Richard H. (Republican)  
Representative, 6th District, Louisiana  
Elected 1986 to 100th Congress  
Reelected to succeeding Congresses



## BACKGROUND

Born: New Orleans, Louisiana, 22 May 1948  
Home: Baton Rouge, Louisiana  
Marital status: Married (Kay) - 2 grown children  
Religion: United Methodist  
Education: Louisiana State University, BA, 1971  
Military: None  
Profession: Real estate broker

Political: Louisiana House, 1972-86; switched from Democrat to Republican in 1985; unsuccessful candidate for the Louisiana Senate, 1981. Succeeded Rep W. Henson Moore (R), who ran unsuccessfully for the Senate. Reelected in 2000 with 68% of the vote and in 2002 with 84%.

Rep Baker is a conservative and party loyalist, pro-business and anti-labor. Became a leading voice for reforming government to be innovative yet fiscally responsible, entrepreneurial, yet responsive, flexible yet efficient.

In the 106th Congress, expressed his personal sense of honor to be able to serve on the Veterans Affairs Cmte and have the chance to repay those who have served this country and to help write the next great chapters of America's veteran support. As a member of the Subc on Health, he was proud to have played a role in passing an unprecedented \$1.7 billion increase in spending for veterans' health care. Noted that he is pursuing the establishment of an enhanced-quality healthcare facility in his district to serve veterans in that community. Recalled family stories about his father, a World War II naval aviator. Took the occasion of the 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the Panama Canal to rally Congressional support in calling for White House action to safeguard US interest in the Central American region. In view of concern with the consequences of the transfer of the Canal for US strategic and economic interests, took the lead in helping to form a Panama Canal Caucus, to focus attention on the urgent need to resolve fundamental questions. Particularly drew attention to concerns about the threat to US strategic interests of China's increasing influence in the area. Stated that the ultimate goal of the Caucus should be nothing less than permanent US military presence in Panama.

In the 107th Congress, announced he was introducing legislation to provide additional Federal funding for the National Guard Youth Challenge Program to help high school drop outs enhance their life skills, etc. Noted that the bill would remove the mandate that directs excess Youth Challenge Program funding to JROTC. Paid tribute to the successes of the 926<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing of the Air Force Reserve and support personnel of the 706<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron during Operation Desert Storm and other on-going missions which are due to the outstanding leadership, devotion to duty, and sacrifice of the men and women of the unit and the valuable support of their families. Spoke in support of H.R. 2540, to make various improvements to veterans benefits programs. This legislation includes his proposal to create a centralized 1-800 number to improve veterans' access to information about their benefits.

Additional: After redistricting, England AFB became his responsibility in the 103rd Congress (1993). Was previously represented by Rep Holloway (R). Base closed 15Dec92. Was mentioned as a possible candidate for governor in 1995 and senator in 1996 but elected not to run in either race. Prior to the 108<sup>th</sup> Congress represented Claiborne AF Range (ANG).

Member: House Navy / Marine Corps Caucus  
AF Bases: None

## COMMITTEES

FINANCIAL SERVICES

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE – Subc on Aviation

VETERANS AFFAIRS -- Subc on Health